

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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O 121145Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4781

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 5795

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, SY, US
SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER FROM PRESIDENT ASSAD

REF: STATE 192565

1. I WAS SUMMONED TO FONMINISTRY SEPTEMBER 11, THE DAY
BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE FIVE-DAY RAMADAN HOLIDAY, TO
RECEIVE ASSAD'S ANSWER TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER OF
AUGUST 14 (REFTEL). THE MINISTRY TRANSLATION OF ASSAD'S
REPLY IS AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I RECEIVED YOUR LETTER WHICH AMBASSADOR MURPHY DELIVERED
ON 16 AUGUST 1977, AND I HIGHLY APPRECIATE YOUR PURSUANCE
OF EFFORTS TO ATTAIN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE IN

THE MIDDLE EAST REGION.

THE VISIT OF SECRETARY VANCE TO THE REGION AND HIS
MEETING TWICE WITH US DURING THE VISIT WAS A USEFUL
OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND PRESENT IDEAS.

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WE CONSIDER THAT THIS VISIT CONSTITUTED AN IMPORTANT
STEP DURING WHICH WE STROVE TO GIVE OUR POINTS OF
VIEW WITH RESPECT TO ALL THE ISSUES THAT WERE DISCUSSED.

TO START WITH, I WISH TO POINT OUT CLEARLY THAT THE
ISRAELI VIEWPOINTS RELAYED TO US BY SECRETARY VANCE
WERE IN WHOLE AND IN EVERY PART OBSTACLES IN THE

WAY OF THE EFFORTS AIMED AT REALIZING PEACE. WHILE ISRAEL IS TALKING ABOUT PEACE, SHE WANTS TO RETAIN AND CONTINUE WITH ALL THE ASPECTS AND FACTS OF AGGRESSION. WHILE ISRAEL SAYS THAT IT IS NOT PLACING PRECONDITIONS, WE SEE IT CLINGING TO EVERYTHING THAT IS BOUND TO WRECK THE PEACE DISCUSSIONS BY DEFORMING (ARABIC "TAMYIJJ") THE ISSUE AND TO GAIN TIME IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT ITS PLANS TO PERPETUATE THE CURRENT SITUATION AND TAKE ACTIONS AIMED AT ANNEXATION AND EXPANSION.

FOLLOWING ARE THE SPECIFIC VIEWS WE SEE ADEQUATE AS A BASIS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUE.

A. PROCEDURES:
SINCE THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IS THE CORE OF THE

PROBLEM, WE REITERATE OUR VIEW IN RESPECT TO THE NECESSITY OF THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PALESTINIANS IN THE PEACE TALKS AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

IN VIEW OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THE DECISIONS OF THE APRIL 7 SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN RABAT, THE PLO IS THE

LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. WE FORESEE ITS PARTICIPATION ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE TWO
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FOLLOWING FORMULAE:

EITHER (1) BY FORMING A UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION, REPRESENTING SYRIA, EGYPT, JORDAN AND THE PLO
OR (2) BY FORMING INDIVIDUAL ARAB DELEGATIONS REPRESENTING SYRIA, EGYPT, JORDAN AND THE PLO.

B. WITH RESPECT TO THE ISSUE OF PEACE:
THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967 AND THE RETURN TO THE LINES OF 4 JUNE 1967;
SECURING THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN

PEOPLE, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR INDEPENDENT STATE. WE ENVISAGE THIS STATE AS COMPRISING THE WEST BANK AND THE GAZA STRIP WITH A CORRIDOR BETWEEN THEM;

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UN RESOLUTIONS;
MURPHY

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4782

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 DAMASCUS 5795

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"ENDING THE STATE OF WAR" MEANS PEACE.

THE AGREEMENT MAY INCLUDE OTHER COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES, DETAILS OF WHICH MAY BE AGREED UPON SUCH AS DELINEATING NARROW BUFFER ZONES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDERS AND STATIONING INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS IN THESE ZONES AS WELL AS OTHER MEASURES THAT DO NOT VIOLATE THE PRINCIPLES STATED IN THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPHS.

THESE ARE THE IDEAS WHICH WE ENVISAGE TO COMPRIZE THE PEACE AGREEMENT. THEY ARE OBJECTIVELY BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES AND BASES OF THE UN CHARTER AND THE UN RESOLUTIONS INCLUDING SC RESES 338 AND 242.

WITH RESPECT TO THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH LEBANON, I WISH TO AFFIRM THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN THIS ISSUE IS ISRAEL'S CONSTANT INTERVENTION IN THIS AREA. SUCH INTERVENTION REPRESENTS THE MAJOR OBSTACLE BLOCKING EFFORTS EXERTED TO IMPLEMENT THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT AND CONSEQUENTLY TO ACHIEVE STABILITY AND SECURITY THROUGHOUT LEBANON. NONETHELESS, THIS WILL NOT PREVENT US FROM CONTINUING OUR CONCENTRATED EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT AND THE CEASE-FIRE AND TO REALIZE STABILITY IN THAT PART OF LEBANON. MR. KHADDAM DURING HIS COMING VISIT TO THE U.S. IN SEPTEMBER WOULD BE

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READY TO CLARIFY THE ABOVE POINTS DURING HIS MEETINGS WITH YOU AND MR. VANCE.

I SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REAFFIRM OUR KEEN DESIRE
TO PURSUE THE PROCESS SO AS TO REALIZE A JUST PEACE IN THE
REGION. I REITERATE MY APPRECIATION FOR YOUR SINCERE
EFFORTS TOWARDS THIS END.

SINCERELY YOURS, HAFEZ AL-ASSAD
UNQUOTE

2. COMMENT:

ALTHOUGH THIS LETTER IS BASICALLY A REITERATION
OF ASSAD'S PREVIOUS VERBAL FORMULATIONS, IT IS NONETHELESS
ENCOURAGING THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN WILLING TO TAKE THIS
FIRST STEP IN THE EXERCISE OF DRAFTING A PEACE AGREEMENT.

3. WE NOW HAVE ALL THAT I SUSPECT THAT WE ARE GOING TO
GET PRIOR TO KHADDAM'S ARRIVAL IN WASHINGTON IN THE WAY OF
SYRIAN DRAFT LANGUAGE FOR A "PEACE AGREEMENT." THE
TEXT CONTAINS NO SURPRISES BUT WE HAD NO REASON TO EXPECT ANY.
ITS ONLY LOOPHOLE IS IN THE STATEMENT THAT "THE AGREEMENT
MAY INCLUDE OTHER COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES, THE DETAILS OF
WHICH MAY BE AGREED UPON...AS WELL AS OTHER MEASURES THAT
DO NOT VIOLATE THE PRINCIPLES STATED IN THE PREVIOUS
PARAGRAPHS."

4. THE DELAY IN ASSAD'S ANSWERING CARTER'S AUGUST 14
MESSAGE IS LARGEMLY ATTRIBUTABLE, I BELIEVE, TO THE FACT
THE PRESIDENT WAS ON VACATION IN THE LATTAKIA DISTRICT
FOR THE LAST 10 DAYS OF AUGUST AND THE FIRST WEEK OF
SEPTEMBER. IT IS PROBABLY SIGNIFICANT THAT ITS DELIVERY FOLLOWED
THE LATEST ARAB FONMINISTERS CONFERENCE IN CAIRO.

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5. NOTE ON TRANSLATION. IN THE ARABIC TEXT THE SENTENCE
"MR. KHADDAM DURING HIS COMING VISIT...WITH YOU AND MR.
VANCE." IS INCLUDED AS THE FINAL SENTENCE OF THE
PARAGRAPH ON SOUTH LEBANON. I AGREE WITH THE FONMINISTER'S
INTERPRETER THAT THIS SENTENCE LOGICALLY REFERS TO THE WHOLE
PRECEDING MESSAGE AND NOT JUST TO SOUTH LEBANON.

MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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TAGS: PPDC, PBOR, PINS, SY, US, XF, (CARTER, JIMMY), (ASSAD, HAFIZ)
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